

CITRUS GREASY SPOT

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Greasy spot, a serious citrus leaf and fruit disease in Florida, is caused by the fungus, *Mycosphaerella citri* Whiteside (2). Infected leaves may drop prematurely in the fall and continue dropping throughout the winter and following spring. When leaf fall is severe, the following year's fruit crop may be reduced. Further, severely defoliated trees have been found to be more prone to cold injury (1).

Greasy spot rind blotch, also known as "pink pitting", is particularly severe on grapefruit but may occur on sweet oranges (3).

SYMPTOMS. The fungus infects the leaves and fruit, usually in June, July, and August from spores (ascospores) that have developed on diseased fallen leaves. The first symptoms of greasy spot do not appear on grapefruit and orange leaves until at least four months after infection by the fungus. On lemon leaves, symptoms may be expressed in four to six weeks after infection. Symptoms first show as slight blisters on the underside of the leaf, and the corresponding top surface shows a yellow mottle (Fig. 1). With age, the blistered areas turn dark orange to brown to black and have a greasy appearance (1) (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1. Early symptoms of greasy spot on underside of leaf.



Fig. 2. Late symptoms of greasy spot on underside of leaf.

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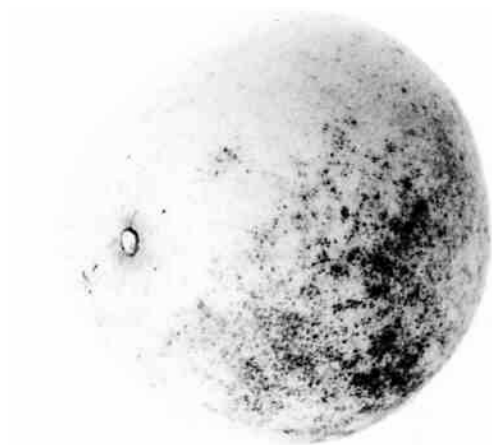


Fig. 3. Symptoms of greasy spot rind blotch on grapefruit.



Fig. 4. Close-up of greasy spot rind blotch.

Greasy spot rind blotch shows on the fruit as pinpoint black specks. These specks occur between the oil glands resulting in a delayed coloring of the rind in the infected areas (1) (Figs. 3 and 4).

CONTROL. Whiteside (4) found that copper fungicides gave better control of greasy spot when applied in June, July, or August, (i.e., at time of infection) than when applied as a postbloom spray. The oil spray applied to Florida citrus groves in the summer as a multipurpose pesticide is usually sufficient for greasy spot control on leaves. However, oil is often inadequate for the control of greasy spot rind blotch.

SURVEY AND DETECTION. Look for small blister-like spots which turn dark orange to brown to black with age. Leaves drop prematurely.

LITERATURE CITED.

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